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ABSTRACT

This description of resource sharing by the university (i.e., national), libraries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda examines such factors as finance, communication, and dependence on imported literature. In discussing the acquisition of local literature, it is established that the greatest amount of resource sharing is inter-university, while cooperation with other types of libraries is negligible, and varies with the quality and quantity of the collection of each individual library; it is also noted that gifts and exchanges were greater in number than purchases. Constraints identified are attributed primarily to finance. Potential roles for the Library of Congress collecting center based in Nairobi in the acquisition of local literature by East African libraries are suggested. (JEG)

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RESOURCE SHARING IN RELATION TO
LIBRARY ACQUISITION: A CASE FOR
EAST AFRICA

by

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Resource sharing in relation to library acquisition:
a case for East Africa.

I n t r o d u c t i o n

The region "East Africa" has been chosen, inter alia, because the three states, Kenya, Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and Uganda which make up the region share a common colonial history having been colonized by Britain at the turn of the last century. Also because English remains the major medium of instruction although Kiswahili is widely understood.

Parker's "Regional co-operation in library services: an opportunity for developing countries"¹ is most applicable to the study of the subject in the region. Its comprehensiveness and penetrative coverage of "co-operation" do not require a repetition of what the above writer has already ably done. In this paper it will suffice to apply general principles of co-operative acquisition contained in the above paper to co-operative acquisitions policies, and practices that obtain in East Africa. Also an attempt will be made to describe and briefly analyse certain constraints which interfere with the attainment of effective co-operative acquisition policies and practices in the region. The terms "resource sharing" and "co-operation" will, of course, be used interchangeably.

The paper is written from a background of university library acquisitions work and, therefore, other types of libraries will

not be covered but perhaps only referred to in passing when necessary. The phrase "University library" applies to the Main library in each respective state. Thus excluding the sub-libraries and libraries of the affiliated colleges.

Constraints to resource-sharing

As a departing point, we must note that developing countries experience serious shortages in finance, facilities and library infrastructure which obtain in developed or industrialised countries. This being the case, they cannot afford to embark on large and ambitious plans of acquisition like the "Farmington" and Library of Congress Acquisitions schemes whose operation entails spending exorbitant sums of money. Whatever co-operative acquisition plans that they may embark upon must be on quite modest scales and these often are adversely encumbered by constraints beyond their control due to the fact that they have not attained certain levels of development industrially, economically and socially.

Finance is almost a taxing problem which if not surmounted, resource sharing cannot get off the ground. As early as the beginning of the 1960's Holdsworth had this to say about the problem: "There is an acute shortage of money. What is available has to be spread more thinly over the ground whenever a new

university or college is established. Local recurrent grants are presumably near ~~their~~ peak; modest increases are absorbed by rising costs of books and periodicals, and most libraries cannot be expected to do more than keep their collections up-to-date. Prices of English books have risen..² This description sums up the financial picture rather clearly. But it must also be noted that the prices of books and periodicals have rocketed so much since the 1960's that today you need quite an inflated library budget to keep up-to-date a library collection. The above writer was referring to financial provision to libraries throughout Africa since although in other regions of Africa such as West Africa, new universities and colleges mushroomed, they did not do so in East Africa as we still have three universities (in the 1960's colleges of one university of East Africa) and ^{a few} new colleges.

The above last sentence brings us to another problem which greatly limits resource-sharing. Since the 1960's in East Africa no new university was opened in the region. In fact, until 1970, we had ~~one~~ university namely the University of East Africa composed of Nairobi University College, Makerere University and Dar es Salaam University College which in the same year split to become three separate universities. Thus an

area seven times, for example, the size of Great Britain yet there are only three universities and only one university college namely Kenyatta University College. These are separated by great distances ranging from 400-800 miles creating a very loose library net-work with no comparisons, for example, to the close net-work of both public and academic libraries which are evenly distributed throughout Great Britain. British universities and colleges are in close proximity with one another. Learned and professional societies, research institutes, academies and other institutions of all sorts boasting modern libraries are similarly, as the above, situated just a few miles from one another and a great majority of them are within short-walking distance within any area which could be designated a local regional area for the purpose of local co-operation. The number of users is ample and evenly distributed on that tiny island. The number of three universities in East Africa stands in sharp contrast to Britain's more than fifty universities leave alone other institutions of higher learning. For comprehensive comparisons of the two regions see "Commonwealth Year book, 1975 - p.176-795 - Great Britain, pp.1692-1698 - Kenya, pp. 1901-1909 - Uganda and pp. 1895-1907 Tanzania".

From the above description, it can be seen that the problem of location and distribution of such rare resources of the universities in East Africa can be a most cumbersome problem in resource sharing. Parker on location asserts "that regional co-operative scheme based on small groups of countries in close proximity and preferably - with common boundaries - have greater prospects for success than more widely diffused schemes..."³ This criterion for success of a co-operative scheme is most likely to be affected by problems involving location and distribution since although these conditions which he prescribes obtain in East Africa, as we shall see later, the state of development of co-operative acquisition leaves much to be desired.

Naturally the problem of distance and distribution of these rare resources creates transportation or communication problems. About these problems, it will perhaps suffice to assert that communication in general is really poor and inadequate since, for example, a day is required to travel by the cheapest means (rail) from any one of the universities. Telex services are virtually non-existent since no library in the region is known to be connected to any telex system. There are no computer services for libraries either. Parker suggests that "co-operative acquisition is meaningless unless linked with co-operative storage and interlending..."⁴

With quite severe communications problems as briefly described above indiscriminative co-operative storage is not only practically impossible but would be too expensive to justify the operations costs and use. Thus co-operative storage is limited in the region except when and where there is a possibility of interlending.

Parker notes that "libraries in developing countries with inadequate local publishing industries rely for a high proportion of their acquisitions on foreign literature."⁵ Shortage of literature in local dialects, with consequent dependence on imported literature in languages which the majority of the people in the region cannot understand, is also one of the greatest obstacles which adversely affects resource sharing.

The publishing weakness in developing countries stands as below. "Only one title out of every five produced to day originates in a developing country, of the more than 500,000 titles which are issued every year - a new book a minute - 80% come from the countries of Europe, plus Japan, the Soviet Union and the United States"⁶. Ilono has stated that "For instance Printed in Tanzania 1972, the National Bibliography for Tanzania, listed 73 publishers and printers which deposited copies of their publications in the National Central Library under the Libraries (Deposit of books) Act 1962.

The total number of titles published in 1972 was 195 of these 195 were in Kisumu, 34 in English, 1 in Swahili, 1 in Kikuyu, 1 in Gujarati and 1 in Hindi.² The above figures clearly illustrate the publishing weakness of one of the three countries of which East Africa is made up but it is also representative of the other two countries.

The dependence on imported literature is also clearly illustrated by the above writer when he states that "Tanzania Library Service relies very heavily on imported books. In 1971, 43,366 were acquired. Of these 15,439 were from the United Kingdom, 1944 from other overseas sources, and 26,014 were purchased in East Africa. The large number of books ordered from East Africa is misleading as most of them are multiple copies of Kisumu books and English; many readers needed for new literates. For example, of the 22,945 books purchased in East Africa, 24,679 were purchased in Tanzania and were multiple copies of about 800 Kisumu titles, and of the 10,227 books purchased from Kenya most had a foreign origin".³ Trepassing in Public Libraries area has been necessary but the only plea for doing so is that library statistics are not readily available.

To give more relevant figures relating to our subject, we must resort to Makerere University Library reports also contained in the university reports. "During the 1972/73 financial year only 4000 accessioned volumes were purchased whereas 5101 gift and exchange volumes were received and accessioned."⁴ These figures do not include periodicals which are greater in number but not accessioned. It must be pointed out that almost 80% of the gifts and exchange...

from outside East Africa as far as Makerere University library is concerned. The same case applies to purchases. Thus out of the total 5000 volumes acquired that year about 7000 volumes were imported books excluding periodicals. The University library takes roughly 3000 periodical titles.

The crucial point brought out by these figures is that developing countries altogether, although in the majority, produced by far less (100,000 titles a year) than the developed countries (400,000 titles a year) and these including East Africa must continue to look to developed countries for foreign aid in the form of literature.

Further to the above short coming, we must realize that there are so many dialects (over 200) in East Africa. It will never be possible to establish a true public library service for all until literature in indigenous dialects becomes available but this is practically impossible and, therefore, untenable. We can, therefore, only assume that if Kiswahili which is the national language for the three states gains ground as one of the media of instruction in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning like universities and colleges, then dependence on imported literature may just be slightly reduced. But this is a dream whose fulfilment is relegated to the distant future and if all things go well towards the end of the present century. At this juncture we have also got to bear in mind the point of fact that no university library can function effectively without dependence on imported literature at least to a certain extent. Eastern libraries have got to become more and more international in a world

which is increasingly becoming monopolistic.

Overreliance dependence on imported literature and library materials does not rule out cooperation in acquisitions work. As Longa says, with reference to cooperative acquisitions schemes in East Africa "the aim would not be complete coverage of all foreign publications. That would not be desirable, nor could we afford it. The policy would be based on judicious selective acquisition of significant foreign publications in the entire field of knowledge".¹⁰ If this were feasible, a plan could be developed to reduce the time-lag between placing an order and receipt of supply from overseas which is roughly about six months. This is an area which still needs to be researched into as to whether the creation of "central library supply agencies"¹¹ such as those obtaining in Scandinavian countries and elsewhere for the supply of not only imported literature but other library material would have relevant advantages over the present decentralized policies and practices where by each university or college procures materials and services separately particularly from overseas.

Bibliographic information

Each of the three University libraries has tended to procure very expensive bibliographical tools which are indispensable in the tracing of information to ensure that up-to-date and correct bibliographic information is included on indexes for imported books and materials.

They are flooded with publications (mainly newspapers) from
countries which also send the same and as the above, it
is, therefore, not quite certain that this is an area where
resources showing is suitable bearing in mind the conditions
already mentioned. It should also be pointed out that the
bibliographical tools are used daily and heavily for processing
and ordering purposes.

The area where there appear to be more for resources
showing is in the local literature. However, this is an area
which has effectively been penetrated by the library of
Singapore collecting center in that office based in Jakarta.
It is still not clear this is an area where Parker's "Type 1
personal cooperative arrangements"¹² have been made. This
office is perhaps the best example of a foreign library agency
which is established in the region. This center has since
the early 1950's evolved as a sort of representative of
collecting all publications published and unpublished in that
Asian and neighbouring regions to send to the headquarters in
New York for processing and inclusion in their National Union
catalog and production of Library of Congress cards. This office
is a sort of active one in collecting unpublished publications such
as seminar and conference papers, pamphlets, essays and theses
not normally available through the normal book trade. There

inclusion in the National Union catalog is misleading in that librarians who use this information for ordering materials are given the impression that they are trade materials available on a commercial basis. Failure to locate original sources of such materials often implies that such materials will never be acquired. Worse still if a library is using L. cards, it is bound to keep cards without books that they represent and only to throw them away in the end.

So effective and comprehensive is the center's collections that libraries in America are in a position to acquire and use Africana materials far much faster and economically than countries in Eastern Africa. The Library of Congress **Accessions** list issued by the center is a very important current awareness publication for publications produced in Eastern Africa and is a quite useful bibliographical tool for bibliographic information for ordering materials. Another benefit to libraries in the region is the direct current awareness brought about by requests sent to libraries by this center. The three Universities also receive catalogue cards for all materials acquired by this center against which they use to check

their desiderata.

Could the center be called upon to play a more effective role than it has hitherto played ? The answer is definitely positive and it could do this in two important aspects. If the Center could issue accessions lists more frequently and quickly, this would reduce the time-lag between ordering and receipt of supplies. The Center could also be called upon to indicate source of all materials it collects since it is appalling that some of these materials are erroneously ordered from overseas by libraries in East Africa. This situation also suggests that if the Field Office could be allowed more copies of those materials and established a center in a strategic area where these could be ~~damped~~, librarians in the region could direct their requests to such a center (a Central supply agency for local literature) instead of ordering them from overseas or scattered local supply points.

The above descriptions have largely been concerned with some of the problems that encumber resource sharing but we have to turn to a description of the little informal or formal amount of cooperation which obtains in the region.

Local Cooperative Acquisition

Makerere University is the oldest of the three Universities in the region having been founded as a college in 1922. The following quotation is a true reflection of the aims and objectives for its foundation. "At present there is a grave danger of the country being flooded with half-educated men, whose education does not fit them to fill any place in the life of the community which satisfies the ambitions created by their education"¹³.

Since 1922 Makerere (University) College library (supposing that there was a library) had to bear the burden of providing library services to all the East Africans who were admitted into the College. Until the 1950's Makerere had no comparable institution of higher learning with which to share library resources in the region. Thus the cooperation, however little, it was with overseas institutions mainly in Great Britain.

"The College had now formally applied to the university of London for admission to the special relationship and authorised the opening of negotiations on academic matters."¹⁴ That was in 1948. As we shall see later, Makerere continued to attract and gather friendship with several university libraries in Britain and elsewhere with which she exchanged publications and

received valuable gifts in the form of finance, books and other library materials. This is the pattern of cooperation which is very fruitful on which Makerere and the sister universities have greatly depended and continue to depend for their acquisitions growth and effectiveness.

It must be stressed that the three universities publish well over ~~60%~~ of all publications published in the region. There are for this reason the most productive institutions followed by the respective governments and by the East African Community. The publications of each of the above institutions are mutually exchanged and where exchange forbids, purchases are made. The three university libraries have been designated National Libraries and are, to a certain extent, well covered by Legal depository acts of each respective country. All African community publications are acquired by virtue of memberships of the three states to the Community.

The three universities have agreements whereby they exchange catalogue cards for compiling union lists of Africana acquired by each one. This ensures comprehensiveness and effectiveness in acquisition, use and interlending of such materials. This is when and where co-operative storage

informally works since it has been the policy and practice of the libraries to abstain from acquiring titles on these cards in the hope that they can be obtained by interlending unless they are specifically required for one reason or another. Further to the above advantages of exchanging catalogue cards, effective photo-copying is also facilitated if required by any one of the partner university libraries.

The three universities own printeries to facilitate the publishing of numerous manuscripts produced by their academicians and students and their official work. That being the case, it was agreed among the three university libraries to exchange all publications bearing university imprints freely. The agreement has been adhered to so effectively that it is most fruitful. However where a partner lags behind in fulfilling his role, he may incur punishment by being required to purchase certain items in stead. This state of affairs corroborates Parker's contention, to some extent, that " A participant with very limited resources, on the other hand, may be unable to meet its responsibilities under the scheme without great difficulty.."15 However personal experience in this type of work would also suggest inefficiency

of personnel as a possible cause of failure. Further to the above, it is not unusual for a librarian to request his fellow librarian to purchase a publication for a library in the region without prepayment.

As noted above the greatest amount of resource sharing appears to be inter-university. This is true to a certain extent since these are the oldest and richest in most of the resources. This has also been confirmed by Wise and Lwanga respectively "cooperation in East Africa at present is largely based on the efforts of libraries that are large enough, and have staff, to assist each other and supply occasional help to enquiries from smaller libraries"¹⁶. At Makerere University we have the following policy, we consider inter-library loan arrangements only with well organised libraries"¹⁷. To sum up the situation in this respect, it may be pointed out that co-operation with other types of libraries is negligible and varies with the quality and quantity of the collection of each individual library.

Subject to the constraints already considered, local resource sharing works fairly well and as it may be observed, it is largely in the form of gifts and exchanges without resorting too much to a quid pro quo policy, Mutual trust,

recognition of one another's difficulties and devotion to professionalism also play a big role in combating failure.

International resource sharing

As a departing point, the three universities were founded by expatriates mainly from Britain and other English speaking countries. Some of these were quite influential academicians and researchers in their particular fields and had one foot here and another foot in the institutions from which they were seconded. They researched extensively in areas which were apparently new and which often aroused great fascination and interest of their fellows in the respective countries from which they happened to come. This created good ground for appealing for aid in the form of money, books and other materials and also for exchanging publications in which they published their research. Some of these were quite eager to publish their research in internationally renowned journals. Manuscripts for books would also be sent to international publishers overseas who could obtain for them the utmost publicity which would ensure a good market and fame for them and the authors. It must be observed that this trend of things has not changed much to day even when the majority of these expatriates have left and been replaced by indigenous academicians and researchers who to a certain extent continue to imitate their

predecessors.

As for the university libraries in the region these expatriates introduced them to libraries belonging to their respective universities and other institutions with whom they had cordial relationships. They were firm advocates for soliciting aid from overseas and preachers of poverty endured by us. A former librarian of Makerere University had this to write in an international journal. "Money is therefore in great demand. Just as overseas capital was needed to build up many of the college libraries, so overseas capital is needed if many of them are to do more than simply marktime... Financial support is required for national bibliography... Local support cannot meet the expense of all the basic research material required, nor of all the Africana which is indispensable..."¹⁸ A National bibliography was inaugurated by the Uganda Society and published in the journal Uganda Journal which Makerere University library acquires and sends overseas several copies on exchange.

Many such pleas, as the above, for aid were made by expatriate academicians and librarians and the response and cooperation was most encouraging from university libraries,

governments, individuals and other institutions almost throughout the world.

Exchange agreements were initiated so much that at the time of writing, Makerere University library has as many as 2,000 gifts and exchange partners with whom we exchange publications and from whom we receive gifts regularly. Over 40 individual titles are currently sent on exchange and sometimes as gifts by this university.

The University Library report of July 1968 - June 1969 was as follows:- Purchased volumes accessioned 3,200. Gift and exchange volumes accessioned 3,500. Five especially notable gifts were those of Sir Alexander Gar-Saunders, The French Embassy, the U.S.S.R Embassy, The German Embassy, and the Japanese Embassy. We also received 40 books from the Norwegian Agency for International Development and 150 books from the United States of America. We received a good number of books from Princeton University through their continued presentation programme. The library was fortunate in continuing to receive donations from Princeton, Chicago and Texas university presses and Double day & Co. Inc. The population Council also donated a number of valuable books to the library. The library also

continued to receive donations from other institutions and individual donors.¹⁹

The above long quotation which concerns just one financial year is also typical of other years. It illustrates one important aspect of the international pattern of resource sharing which has proved to be most fruitful and on which the university libraries have continued to depend for their growth and development. It may also be noted that gifts and exchanges were greater in number than purchases. This is good enough for libraries with small and inadequate library budgets as is the case in developing countries.

Another aspect of international cooperation is by virtue of the three governments having memberships to world bodies like the United Nations and its agencies. All their publications are sent to University libraries which are designated as National libraries. Also overseas governments, individual organisations and publishers are useful sources of their publications.

Conclusion

We have seen that there are certain serious constraints which do not permit the development of effective schemes of cooperative acquisition in which several libraries

Conclusion and

can participate at a time. The pattern is largely bilateral but in some cases as for international organizations like the United Nations and its agencies it could be regarded as multilateral. Cooperative storage is also greatly limited by the same constraints. We have also observed the scarcity of resources for local cooperative acquisition as opposed to diversified large quantities of resources available overseas due to lack of local publishing capability which in turn leads to dependence mainly on imported resources. The dependence on imported resources mainly by gifts and exchanges, which greatly outnumber purchases, is a means by which libraries in the region can supplement small and inadequate library budgets and which may also be a means for economizing the rare-resources in order to make both ends meet.

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